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Identical letters dated 11 August 2016 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I should like to inform you that the Syrian Government rejects the allegations contained in the identical letters from the Permanent Representatives of Colombia, Qatar, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to the United Nations (A/70/986-S/2016/537). I should like to draw your attention to the following:

I. Many of signatories to the above-mentioned letter are representatives of regimes that, since the beginning of the crisis in Syria, have provided all manner of support to the armed terrorist groups in Syria. Those States have also tried to confer legitimacy on these groups by calling them at first "the moderate opposition", then "the moderate armed opposition", and finally "non-State armed groups". Some of those groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and the Nusrah Front, have been listed as terrorist groups by the Security Council. Others have been kept off the list by certain influential States on the Security Council, even though they display all the hallmarks of terrorist groups, such as the Ahrar al-Sham movement, the Soldiers of al-Aqsa, the Islamic Front, the Soldiers of the Levant, the Islamic Turkmen party, the Army of Islam, the Green Battalion, the Suqur al-Izz Battalion, the Army of Muhammad and the Nur al-Din Zanki movement, which recently beheaded a Palestinian-Syrian child refugee who was less than 12 years old. The actions of that terrorist organization are no less criminal than those of any of the other terrorist groups that some still insist on calling "the moderate opposition". Since the beginning of the crisis in Syria, those groups have carried out bloodcurdling crimes, including eating livers, throwing civilians from tall buildings, mutilating bodies, and plundering entire villages and taking their women and children captive.

II. We share the letter's very proper sentiment, albeit expressed with intent to deceive, of concern "at the ongoing grave humanitarian situation in Syria, the continued violations of the cessation of hostilities, the lack of protection of civilians". However, we feel obliged to identify the real causes of the current situation. Why have humanitarian conditions in certain parts of Syria sunk to such a low level? Who are the parties that are violating the cessation of hostilities? Who is behind them and who is supporting them? Who are the parties that are flouting all instruments and laws on the protection of civilians? We answer as follows:

- The humanitarian situation in certain parts of Syria has deteriorated owing to the influx of thousands of terrorist mercenaries from across the Turkish border. Those mercenaries are supported by Saudi Arabia and Qatar with weapons, money and takfirist fatwas that justify killing children and raping women. The Turkish Government makes its territory available for camps where the terrorists are trained by officers from the United States, France, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Jordan in the use of various types of weapons. They are then brought into Syria where they run rampant in certain areas, terrorizing civilian inhabitants and using them as human shields.

- The armed terrorist groups and their backers are, first and foremost, responsible for the "violations of the cessation of hostilities". From day one of the agreement, they have rained hundreds of shells and rockets down on cities and peaceable residential neighbourhoods, leaving behind hundreds of dead and injured. Some people are wilfully forgetting that Muhammad Alloush, the man put forward by the States supporting the terrorist groups as the chief negotiator for the Syrian opposition in Geneva, was the person who, in the middle of intra-Syrian talks that were supposed to lead to a settlement between the Syrian factions, called openly for suspension of the cessation of hostilities agreement, reopening of the battlefronts, bombing of cities and attacks on the Syrian Army.

- The prescription for resolving the Syrian crisis is well known to all States. It lies in stamping out terrorism and taking on those who support, finance, promote and hand down fatwas justifying it. We remind the Member States that although the Security Council has adopted numerous counter-terrorism resolutions under Chapter VII, notably resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015), the Council has not taken a single step to implement them, because if the measures called for in those resolutions were to be implemented, the first States affected would be those that have decades-long alliances with certain influential Security Council members. That includes the Turkish regime, which has set up the camps in its territory where terrorists are trained before being sent into Syria to kill Syrians and destroy infrastructure, and, more importantly, the Saudi Arabian regime, which is the spiritual father of extremist terrorist organizations such as Al-Qaida, ISIL, Boko Haram and many others that take inspiration from the Wahhabi creed upon which the Al Saud regime was founded.

- It is ironic that the signatories to the above-mentioned letters should state that "it is incomprehensible to our Governments that people in Syria continue to be subjected to unconscionable violence of a historic scale". We say to the representatives of those regimes that it is the Syrian people in their entirety, the great and the small, who are asking why over 110 States have conspired

from the start of the crisis to subject them to unconscionable violence of a historic scale. It does not take research centres or in-depth studies to understand that the cause of the violence is the terrorism that certain States have supported with tens billions of dollars and tens of thousands of mercenary foreign terrorists. Nor do those States stop at that particular variety of terrorism. They combine it with a vicious economic terrorism perpetuated through coercive unilateral measures that have compounded the suffering of the Syrian people still further.

III. The Syrian Government reaffirms its commitment to delivering humanitarian assistance to persons affected by the crisis in all Syrian governorates, without discrimination, and to cooperating with the United Nations and international agencies engaged in humanitarian work in Syria to see to it that such assistance is delivered in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the rules of international law and the guiding principles for humanitarian emergency assistance set forth in General Assembly resolution 46/182, in particular respect for national sovereignty and the role of the State in supervising the distribution of humanitarian assistance within its territory.

IV. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic reaffirms its long-standing position that the crisis in Syria requires a political solution based on intra-Syrian dialogue under Syrian leadership and without preconditions. It further stresses that the political approach goes hand in hand with counter-terrorism efforts, which will continue until all of the armed terrorist groups active in Syria have been eradicated.

V. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic once again calls on the Security Council to compel those States that support and finance armed terrorist groups to refrain from doing so, in implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on countering terrorism and the financing thereof, particularly resolutions 2170 (2014), 2178 (2014), 2199 (2015) and 2253 (2015). Compliance with and enforcement of those resolutions is the key to resolving the situation in Syria and delivering an unprecedented amount of humanitarian assistance to those in need in Syria.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 72 (c), and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative